The Water-Spirit's Bride

Charles J. Bayne

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE

WATER-SPIRIT'S BRIDE

AND

OTHER POEMS

BY

CHARLES J. BAYNE

"Ah! if we spent for heaven above
But half the pains that we
Spend night and day for woman's love,
What angels we would be!"
—TOM MOORE.

"Our passions are joy and grief, love and hatred, hope and fear."—RASSELAS.

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TO

MY LONG-NEGLECTED

MOTHER.

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PREFACE.

"He who ascends to mountain-tops shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
He who surpasses or subdues mankind
Must look down on the hate of those below."—*Childe Harold.*

It is with the spirit of these lines in my heart that I present this work to public candor.

Although I am aware that the heinous crime of rushing into print will probably bring down all the

thunders of critical Jupiters upon my defenseless head, still I make no apologies for the crime. In these degenerate days, with doggerel at a premium and its grinders rich, such a thing would be out of place. To my mind, it is difficult to conceive a thing more nauseating than the lengthy extenuations of the faults which, customarily, writers so generously assume on their appearance before the public, bowing like a vassal to his baron, before the arbitrary forum of public opinion, as though "for their much speaking" those faults would be rendered less faulty or less apparent.

Consequently I deviate from the beaten track, and follow the *penchant* of my own mind and judgment.

In this independence I may be at

error; but, should the influences of my error be brought to bear against me, the sweet consciousness of having sacrificed none of the inborn principles of my nature in order to gain the favorable arbitrament of the greatest of all tyrants, will at least be mine.

There are many palliations which I might offer.

The three years which yet intervene between my age and my majority might be allowed to cover a multitude of literary sins. With life harassed by the necessity of supporting it much of the time by pursuits the most uncongenial to literature imaginable, and my leisure time only sufficient to bewilder me with a glimpse of the golden apples of Knowledge so relentlessly guarded by the dragon of Misfortune, it is no

wonder if this volume teems with error. Indeed, much of the following work, and especially that which gives its name to the collection, was created during illnesses which, by a false economy, were doubtlessly prolonged by taxing a brain, already overtaxed, in utilizing the opportunities of thought thus presented.

But I only say, "What's writ is writ."

There have been promptings, too, which, perhaps, are not to be despised.

That "Life is short" was the first aphorism of Hippocrates; "Art is long," the second. And he who would not prolong the one by the other—he who, a child of an eternal God, does not turn his talents toward the never-ending, must be morbid

and unnatural. Men live again in their bequests to posterity. I have but followed out these facts in my efforts; for, since death is sure, there can be no sweeter funeral hymn than that which Horace sang: "*Non omnis moriar!*"

These verses, too, have been the autobiography of my soul! Shall they die? The children of my feeling! Shall they perish? With the true instinct I answer: If so, let me perish with them.

Again; the mind that has been hampered by narrow circumstances and tantalized half to madness, by the prospect of beauties beyond, cannot but seek to raise itself into more congenial atmosphere. In spirit, I have dwelt from my childhood in other lands and other times. Tully him-

self could not tell how my soul has thrilled at his name, nor Raphael paint my delight, could I behold "The Transfiguration." Shall I fold my hands?

But the promptings are immaterial with the public, so I do not plead them.

I am no cynic, to be sure, snarling at the world, and insensible to whatever favors it may bestow. Were these well-intended efforts well received, no heart could hold more gratitude than mine. But neither am I a suppliant. And whatever may be the judgment of my readers, I shall cherish the blest assurance that, having done the best my circumstance allowed, angels, indeed, could have done no more.

CHARLES J. BAYNE.

Sandersville, Georgia, Feb. 15, 1889.

THE WATER-SPIRIT'S BRIDE.

"I am for the air; this night I'll spend
Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
Great business must be wrought ere noon;
Upon the corner of the moon
There hangs a vaporous drop, profound;
I'll catch it ere it come to ground;
And that, distilled by magic sleights,
Shall raise such artificial sprites,
As, by the strength of their illusion,
Shall draw him on to his confusion."

—SHAKSPEARE.

I.

Have ye learned of the rapture to weave in the brain
All the host of imagining's glittering train,
In their dazzling caparisons gaudily drest,
With the trait of mysteriousness stamped on each breast?

Have ye learned?—where but colors ideal remain,
And but forms suiting fancy the weavers retain?
O rapture indwelling! O bliss unexpressed!
With a heaven or these could we choose which were best?—
Where the ecstacy running along the bright crest
Of the sunshiny thoughts is a stranger to rest!—
Where as free as the sky-lark, as sweet as its note,
Is Conception invited through flowers to float!
Its unrivalled delight all who know may attest,
And who know not may listen—no unwelcome guest—

To this echo of strains which proceed
from the mist
That encircles the region where
thought-souls exist.

II.

Ten thousand lamps their blazing
light
Throw far and wide upon the night.
The music of an hundred throats
Upon the Southern breezes floats,
While merry dancers' feet keep time
To music's unaffected rhyme.
The falcon of eternal Spring
Has dropt a feather from its wing,
Which falls where earth's initial
morn
Already seems to be re-born.
The glare fantastically roves
Among the branches of the groves.

The full-faced moon would else bestow
Its splendid light, but beams below
In brilliantness so far outvie
Its own, it fears to come too nigh.
Fair faces, too, are blushing there,
Kissed by the fragrant summer air;
While, like so many Graces, all,
Linked hand in hand, pursue the ball.
O vision of transcendent mirth!
Can such delight belong to earth?
Since man has sinned, is Eden's hoard
Of pleasures here so near restored?
The crystal streams that flow between
The verdant banks of flowered green
Add their glad echoes of delight
To swell the chorus of the night.

III.

But who is she amid that throng
Of lightest step of sweetest song?—

Who dances to those simple chords
As though the pipe of Pan affords
The inspiration? and who sings
Those Siren songs without their stings?
Her striking brow, half hid from sight
By wavy tresses of the night,
Is high and broad, and—so it seems—
Has never known—nay, had no dreams
Of sorrow; though it gives no sign
Of wanton revelry to line
Its softness in the days not yet
With furrows of a deep regret;
But seems to say, in silent tones,
That all the realm which Pleasure owns
Is not infested with a curse
To follow when those joys disperse.
Her eye—a peerless eye—is set
Around with downy fringe of jet,

And shines as though the very flame
Of Ætna burned from whence it
came,
When animated; and, reposing,
Beams with the light of evening clos-
ing.
Its softness soothes; its flames alarm,
As though empowered to heal or
harm.
Her form, encircled with a dress
Of inartistic carelessness,
As light as robes with which the
elves
Are wont to clad their own light
selves,
Is fashioned in symmetric grace,
And, elf-like, seems to tread on space.

IV.

Yes, who was she? But, ah! one
knew.
Her fingers silently withdrew

From linking clasp on either hand,
And, face by face, the crowd she scanned,
To see if any marked her flight,
Then, trembling with expectant fright,
Passed unobserved beyond the host
In revelry so much engrossed,
And vanished in the darker shade
The meeting moon and torch-light made.

V.

Ye who have felt the vital stream,
Made warmer by the mutual beam
Of love, go coursing through the veins,
Know well how little love refrains.
Too great his joy to feel her charms
Once more reposing in his arms,
And feel that head upon his breast
Which there, and only there, found rest!

VI.

" 'Tis death," she wildly cried, " Leroy
To be observed by her whose joy
Would be unbounded to behold
Thy form by Death's embrace made cold;
To know these lips, that press mine own,
Were as the monumental stone
White, cold and unpulsative grown;
Whose jealous, heathenish delight
To see my heart in widowed night.
Hence, by the bliss which once has been,
And by the hope of that to be,
Speak low; tempt not her murderous sin
To fall—O heavens!—to fall on thee!

My sister!—she it is whose hate
Would have thee meet this awful fate,
As terrible as that of those
Who perished when the flood arose
O'er all creation—since in thee
Would perish all of earth to me—
If but she knew that here beside
This musically flowing tide,
Away from pleasure-drunken brain,
From all deceitfulness may feign,
From senseless syllables that fall,
All ineffectually, and pall—
Entwined in mutual embrace,
With heart to heart and face to face,
We pass this while beneath these bowers
In joy but felt by souls like ours.
Ah! how her hand—perchance succeeding—
Would seek to set thy fond heart bleeding.

I fear her, for her eye at times
Glares wildly, and I know that crimes
Are darkling there 'gainst thee (and
me);
And oft, methinks, I all but see
The purpose in her heart to spring
And give thy spirit to its wing."

VII.

He looked up: in her face an air
Which seemed, and yet was not,
despair,
Was set, but one which might be
well
So deemed, the shades so darkly fell;
But, softly as the morning breaks,
As gently as the evening falls;
As sweetly as the mock-bird wakes
The echo with his varied calls:
Thus soft, sweet, gentle—yet, withal

Full passionate—still in that thrall
Whose bonds were never known to gall—
Her troubled breast was soothed to rest
By tones so tenderly expressed!
Yet still he stood, although the while
Revolving in himself a wile
To foil that jealous heart's design
Which sought to make *his* heart repine.

VIII.

A mischief-loving spirit rose
One midnight from a soft repose
Within his fair, his crystal cave
Beneath the blue of ocean's wave;
And, as he rubbed his sleepy eyes,
He raised his vision to the skies.
The yellow moon was waning low
Toward the western wave. "Ho! ho!"

Said he, "The full moon now declines,
And I must play me, while it shines,
Some game of which remembrance may
Beguile the daylight hours away."
His bright eyes twinkled with delight
To see so favorable a night
For spirit mischief. "Ah!" said he,
"The moon was made for sprites like me."
And as he lightly danced along
The flowered shore, he sang a song
Unearthly foreign, sweet and weird,
Of spirit fear—though naught he feared—
And hope and love; the pleasant strain
Reverberating over plain,
O'er grassy mead and mountain steep,
To break upon the distant deep.

The flowers growing at his feet
He gathered now; and now beside
Some stream he paused to catch the sweet,
Harmonious flowing of its tide;
Then turned to watch the wavelets dance
On moonlit ocean's fair expanse.
The birds delighted him: on high
He watched Polaris' circling train,
While all the glories of that sky
In turn beamed in his eye again.
Thus carelessly he wandered on
In childish glee: but think ye not
His mischievous intent forgot,
Or that too soon would come the dawn.

IX.

The songs which sweet-voiced maidens sang,
So soft, harmonious and low,
Like memories of the long ago
When life was young and pulses sprang
Convulsively in love's first glow,
Came stealing through the moonlight mist;
Across the meadows dank and dun;
Across the streamlet banks which, kissed
By each benignly beaming sun,
Had flecked themselves in bright array
With flowers of a summer's day;
Across where field the woodland meets
And young magnolias breathe their sweets;

Where saplings, in their infant pride,
Their long-leafed tops wave side by side;
Came stealing from the merry throng
With charming influence along
Where towering mountains calmly keep
Their midnight vigils o'er the deep.
Sharp ears (what ears doth mischief lend
For wrongs which years cannot amend!)
Bent low (alas! how low they bend
Since Romans sold their throne away
When Julianus whispered, "Pay!")*
To catch that spirit of delight
So softly breathed upon the night;

* One of the most remarkable incidents in all history. Soon after the murder of Pertinax, the Roman world was sold at public auction, by the corrupt Prætorian guards, to Didius Julianus, a wealthy senator, for the sum of six thousand two hundred and fifty drachms (something over $600) to each member of the guard, then numbering about fifteen thousand.

And yet its strains as sweet as those
Which from the four-and-fifty rose
Beside the Tiber's banks, in prayer
To Jupiter for signal care.
And as the Water-spirit heard
Those strains, his inmost being stirred
With ecstacy, till, light as air,
His feet were swiftly guided there.
Amidst those votaries of glee
Not one was happier than he;
But, having run the rounds of song
And dance, at length he left the throng,
And, wandering idly through the wood
Near by, his thoughts remote from good,
No doubt, he caught the guarded tone
Of lovers close at hand: as quick
As thought he stood as still as stone,
Resolving in his mind what trick

Would best avail his purpose there.
And then, again as light as air,
Unseen, he perched among the boughs
Above and listened to the vows
Of love and constancy—the prayers
For safety from all Hatred's snares.
Then lower bent his ears, for more
Suppressed, if could be, than before
The lovers' tones were, as they planned
The ruse for binding heart and hand.
Their language (O the task was hard
To keep within discretion's guard!)
Told how the miles which intervened
Between their homes (both sweetly screened
With climbing vines, while overhead
The branching pines and oak trees spread
Their sheltering arms) should be traversed
On swiftest horses; and rehearsed

Their signal and escape; their flight
To regions of serene delight.
"Orion's hunt shall not be done
To-morrow night ere we are one.
Remember, love, the serenade
Beneath the honeysuckle shade."

X.

They took their way.
The Mischief smiled,
And said, "The best have been beguiled.
And you'll be ready! So will I.
Orion, some were born to lie."

XI.

1.

"The rose and the jessamine long have been sleeping,
O'ercome with the lullaby sung by the breeze,
Which came with its faint odoriferous creeping
To take a night's pleasure trip over the seas.
But flower of the South! sweet perennial bloomer!
Unsafe is the peacefulness which now is thine.
Deep hatred is rankling with mortal ill-humor
Against thee; so fly, while ye may, and be mine.

2.

"The stars are above us resplendently beaming,
As though they were mutual rivals of light,
Or conscious that under their rays thou art dreaming,
And seek to dispel all the darkness of night.
Bright star of my life, ever shedding benignly
The light of thy countenance over my soul,
Although none beside thee are fashioned divinely
Enough for thy sisters, O make me thy pole!"

Was it the song some angel caught
In heavenly dreams when, having played
Himself asleep, unconscious thought

Along the mystic harp-cords strayed,
And, waking, played it o'er again
Delighted at the glad refrain?
Was it the midnight serenade
The spheres were chanting to their God,
Who in respective orbits bade
Them take their courses at his nod?
The sleeping maiden opened wide
Her eyes and listened, "Can it be
The strains of mortals?" Then she cried,
With sudden thought, "'Tis he! 'tis he!"
And as she placed her tiny feet
Upon the vines which seemed to grow
As though accomplice to the cheat
Enacted for another's woe,
Between the strains the Mischief smiled,

And said, "The best have been beguiled."
"The sweet honeysuckle has climbed to thy casement
With stems plaited strongly, as though to invite
Thy step to descend on its firm interlacement,
And then with thy lover to hasten in flight.
Among the magnolias and Cherokee roses,
The green, sloping hillsides, and streamlets as sweet
As those which a glimpse into heaven discloses,
My home, with thy presence, will then be complete."

XII.

The music ceased. The Mischief smiled,

And said, "The best have been beguiled."

XIII.

"Ride hard, my men; the moon is now
Above the western mountain's brow;
And, ere it sets, our barques must be
Well under way across the sea—
The prize secured—to find somewhere
A land released from constant care;
Where love may bow before its shrine
Unmindful of a foe's design."
The horsemen urged their foaming steed
To quicken still their rapid speed,
Till wood and valley echoed back
The hoof-beats on the stony track.
They climbed the hills and leaped the streams
Like momentary meteor gleams.
Still on and on they urged their way—
Close racers with approaching day.

XIV.

But what was that? Was sight untrue?
Or did he catch a glimpse of her
For whom, those weary hours through,
His anxious heels had plied the spur,
Borne from him in the strong embrace
Of stranger arms at rapid pace?
And was he dreaming when he thought
His own sweet serenade he caught?

XV.

"Ride hard, my men: that form of light
With human seeming, takes his flight,
And bears the prize away to be
His captive underneath the sea.
Look! even now the Spirit stands
Upon the sandy, wave-washed strands!"
And, riding with impetuous speed,
To depth nor current giving heed,
They plunged.

The sparkling, moon-lit waves
Closed in and made their silent graves.

XVI.

The Mischief, seeing, blandly smiled,
And said, "The best have been beguiled."
Then underneath old ocean's tide
The Water-spirit bore his bride.

LINES ON CONCLUDING GIBBON'S "ROMAN EMPIRE."

WHERE joy of freedom joins the fond regret
Which breaking long communion will beget,
How sweet to feel exhilaration's fire,
Which with its own excess must else expire,

Grow mildly sweet, like Leman's
charge,* to feel
The dampening hour of parting o'er it
steal!
Friends have been faithless: in the
pure delight
Engendered by their smiles, the ut-
most height
Of consummated hope I have attained,
To find, alas! their favor all was
feigned;
Or that their soon-expiring memory
willed
Me but the passion which their
charms instilled.
But, ever faithful; patient in my
moods,
When in my heart were waging fac-
tious feuds,

* "My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are."—*Prisoner of Chillon.*

Those pages, with their narratives profound,
All care and restlessness have ever drowned.
Once with a being formed as though the light
Of morning had been stolen to invite
Devotion's tribute—whom my childhood strove
To touch to kindred feelings with its love;
Whom God had made—yes, human, but so fair
That angel beauty nestled in her hair,
And heavenly radiance lit with lovely grace
The rounded softness of her smiling face—
With her I lingered in that sweet suspense
Which renders feeling but the more intense.

When moon-light beamed upon us, and the rose
Was startled o'er us, fitful, from repose
By fragrant souths; and, in the silvery light,
Like Heshbon's pools * her eyes were beaming bright,
The Faithful's gift then seemed I to employ
To make a thousand years each moment's joy. †
But change and desolation followed fast,
And soon the vision, brief as fair, was past,

* "Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim."—*Song of Solomon.*

† Mohammed held out to his hearers that in the heaven of the Faithful each moment of joy would be prolonged a thousand years, and their sensible powers of appreciation increased an hundred fold.

With only Hope and Hope's twin
sister, Prayer,
To render sweet the Marah-founts ‡ of
Care.
Back through long cycles of the
burdened years
A stately mistress, richly robed, ap-
pears.
Dominion is her throne, and in her
hand
The sceptre has become a wizard's
wand.
Linked empires are her footstool;
sparkling gems
Of wealth bestud her golden diadems;

‡"And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses saying: What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord; and the Lord shewed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet."—Exodus, c. XV., v. 23-25. See also Dr. Olin's *Travels in the East* and notes to Milman's *History of the Jews.*

Strength girds, and Beauty on her beauty waits;
Her equals, none: her subjects, potentates.
From her domain came both the gentle breeze
Which bore the whisperings of acacia trees,
And kissed her right cheek as she faced the morn
(Her empire, too,) with fragrant odors born
Of spice-groves; and the ruder blasts that blew
From where the wild Hercynian stalwarts grew
In tacit thraldom, and the other chilled.
She smiled, earth smiled; she frowned, the world was stilled.

But War, the scourge of empires, came that way
When Winter's children sought perpetual May.
Contagious Strife! she breathed thy blight and died,
Nor arms nor strength remedial aid supplied.
In other times her golden eagles gazed
With steady eye where suns of splendor blazed;
And, winging thither, in their talons bore
Those dazzling trophies to their native shore;
In other times her armored legions spread
Through trembling lands the conquering soul of dread.

At last she fell, time's gloried fulness come!
Her tale is sorrow, and her name is Rome!
Proud pilgrims, wandering o'er those rubbished piles,
Where the green creeper, half triumphant smiles,
Go where, in influence, all together spring
The mild authority that makes the king*
And tyrant law—the sage and simpleton
In dust, in silence, half in memory, one,
Grow poor in self to gather wealth aright
And moralize their souls to humbler flight.

*"Dans toute société, soit des animaux, soit des hommes, la violence fit les tyrans; la douce autorité fait les rois"—BUFFON, *Histoire Naturelle.*

Thus have I seen, by each enchanting page,
The necromancies of each teeming age
Since Cæsar ruled with rule, and all went well;
And there, even yet, my humbled soul must dwell.
How strange that those of most immortal mind
To their own immortality are blind;
And, Sampson-like, precipitate a fall
On other heads which whelms them first of all!
Themselves the surest pledges of that great
Eternity beyond this human state,
The Truth their tongues as earnestly deny
As their own minds the proof of Truth supply.

But mind has ever been too deep for mind;
And who may say what others have designed?
There is a phrensy which attacks the brain
And forces men, they know not why, to feign
The wildest opposites to what they feel,
And cherish most the truth they most conceal.
So, oft, perhaps, his mighty heart, which burned
With love of grandeur, truth and greatness, turned,
When fancy wearied of the wreck it trod,
Toward the empire of eternal God!

SALONA.

I TURN from Rome and her attendant train
Of bloody-handed breakers of that peace
Which they pretended ever to maintain:
I close mine eyes, for blood and blood and blood,
Conspiracy, Distortion—grim increase
Of wedded Power and Luxury,—bedim
Their vision: Ahriman, it seems, would throw
The might given for twelve thousand years of woe
Into two centuries and crush the Good
Despite that other end allotted him.*

* In the Zoroastrian religion, according to the Zendavesta, Ahriman, the principle of Evil, shall contend against Ormuzd, the principle of Good,

I turn; yes, turn, and close these burning eyes
For opening under more auspicious skies.
Lo! yonder where Salona *was*—not *is*,
For the Dalmatian's gods are gone and God
(Our God,) is there! — the boundary towers rise.
Within the Golden Gate, no whims but his
Prevailing, Diocletian lived: the sod
Whose taxes he had lately fixed, he tilled
And sowed, and watched the spring-tide swallows build.

during twelve thousand years, for the supremacy; but "at the resurrection of the dead," says Guizot, "he will be entirely defeated by Ormuzd, his power will be entirely destroyed, his kingdom overthrown to its foundations; he will himself be purified in torrents of melting metal; he will change his heart and his will, become holy, heavenly, establish in his dominions the law and word of Ormuzd, uniting himself with him in everlasting friendship, and both will sing hymns in honor of the Great Eternal."

Tragutium yielded up its wealth of stone
To build his vasty palace, that alone
From hollow flatteries of imperial state
He might remain impregnable to hate.
His sword, which fiercest foeman could not brook,
Had been transformed into the shepherd's crook.
Beside the rippling Hyader, when days
Were warm, he sat, and watched the speckled trout,
Which, like so many children, in the rays
Of golden sunlight gaily frisked about.
Salona, blest retreat, where is thy lord?
No: not destroyed by Alemannic horde;

No victim of some Persian host's surprise,
But, by *their* conqueror, too, he, vanquished, lies;
And, in the dust of ages that are not,
His royal clay now shares a common lot.

DISCONTENT.

I SIGHED for a desolate island
Where none might intrude on my dreams—
Where hours all alone I might while and
Alone pace the banks of its streams.

I found me the desolate island;
But there all unquiet I dreamed.
The hours were too lonely to while and
I sighed till gone days were redeemed.

LINES.

A LIQUID mirror, laughing rill,
Goes dancing onward, never still,
Through blossom-covered banks until
The silent river ends its trill.

With birds my requiem to sing;
A brook the only knell to ring,
And floral offerings brought by Spring,
Then death, though victor, has no
sting.

IS IT TRUE THAT THY HEART IS ANOTHER'S?

"I have been patient, let me be so yet;
I have forgotten half I would forget,
But it revives—Oh! would it were my lot
To be forgetful as I am forgot!"
—*Lament of Tasso.*

Is IT true that thy heart is another's?
That thy breast, to mine own once allied,
Now relentlessly, silently smothers
That esteem, once my light and my pride?

Is it true that the sun of Affection,
Which I saw gild the gates of the east,
And, with hesitant, coy circumspection,
Ever rise as its ardor increased,

Has at last reached its noontide of
glory,
And, alas! now descends to the sea,
To difuse, for its light transitory,
An intensified gloom over me?

When the night-winds of Sorrow
swept o'er me—
When my heart grew a-weary with
care,
How that sunlight of Love would
restore me,
And dispel all the clouds of Despair!

And, since life is so full of this sor-
row,
And so ceasless the storms of unrest,
Can it be that no more I may borrow
This nepenthe from thy loving
breast?

Through the vista of days that are vanished
There appears to my tear-bedimmed gaze
Thy sweet image, whose fresh beauty banished
My heart's coldness, and tuned it to praise.

I again feel that tender devotion
Which thy soft, modest graces awoke,
When my heart's timid, nervous emotion
Were the sole words embarrassment spoke.

Ah! how ceaselessly, wildly I blessed thee—
Since the soul that is silent must feel—

Till, courageous with fear, I confessed the
Fond esteem I no more could conceal.

How supreme my delight as beside thee—
While, a school-girl, thy cheek's ruddy glow
Was half hid by thy sun-bonnet, tidy,—
From the steepled old pile I would go!

While the May-zephyrs loved at the flowers,
And the brooks sought the breast of the sea;
Spring-enamored Earth built bridal bowers,
Then I whispered my passion to thee.

Then maturer years came: still unaltered,
But in growth of my ardent desire,
I lived on; love matured, too, nor faltered
While thy blessing remained unacquired.

Like the Faithful, I turned (though more often)
To my Kaaba—thy spirit!—to pray:
And my prayer?—that God's sunlight would soften
Thy dear heart to succumb to my sway.

Then the diligent days found requital:
How creation's sweet polytones rose
In a sweeter, a grander recital
Of delight than the loveless heart knows.

Then the love-tints of heaven grew purer,
And more brightly the stars twinkled through,
Till the universe blent an assurer
Of Elysium to hearts that are true.

Now, alas! must it be that forever,
Through the infinite years of the soul,
With the pain of a fruitless endeavor,
I no more may attain to that goal?

While the Æons make love to the Ages,
And Eternity smiles on their quest,
Shall the heart, whose desire ne'er assuages,
Be not filled? Oh!——Perhaps it is best!

I have loved thee; ('tis vain to remind thee!)
And would live or would die for thee still;
But already this heart has resigned thee
If resignment alone is thy will.

EARTH'S ANGEL.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . . when the morning stars sang together?"—JOB, chap. xxxviii.

WHEN Eve was created in Paradise, she,
Like all things surrounding, was fair to behold,
Which seems unequivocally true when I see
Thee fashioned so perfectly after her mould.

But when I survey thee so nearly removed
From all with which she was accursed for her crime,
I forget how distressful that sinfulness proved,
And those of her line reapproach to sublime.

"O Eden, fair Eden, where now is thy bloom?" *
Though ages had held it since crushed from the earth,
It issued again from the depths of the tomb,
And opened in beauty in thee at thy birth.

* "O Eden, fair Eden, where now is thy bloom?
And where are the pure ones that wept o'er thy doom?
Their plumes never brighten our shadowy skies,
Their voices no more on earth's breezes arise."
—Mrs. Evans, *Night in Eden.*

The angelic harpers were chanting that day,
As their strings flashed the light of the heavenly throne,
So thy soul caught the charm, and a heavenly ray
Beameth bright from thine eyes, while those tones are thine own.

O surely that spirit is far from its home,
Created of heaven, imbued with its light,
And must sigh for the time when no longer 'twill roam,
But, with eyes on the day, shall say, "Mortals, good-night!"

LINES TO A PRETTY GIRL.

[With a roseleaf from Virgil's tomb.]

THIS withered remnant of a bloom
Which flourished once on Virgil's tomb,
Accept, dear girl, with my regards;
And know, that, had this bard of bards
Beheld thee in thy matchless charms,
In vain to heroes and to arms
He would have sought to tune the lyre
On which such deeds could but expire—
Revolting, like Anacreon's,
At chanting deeds of mighty ones. *

* "I wish to tune my quivering lyre
To deeds of fame and notes of fire;
To echo, from its rising swell,
How heroes fought and nations fell;
. . . . . , ...
But still, to martial strains unknown,
My lyre recurs to love alone."—
ANACREON'S *Ode to his Lyre, Byron's Trans.*

Recurring but to love, which he
Beheld most perfectly in thee.
Although in this transported bloom
I mark no delicate perfume,
No graceful curvature and line
To make its form seem half divine,
Nor that exquisite coloring
Of those which flush the cheeks of Spring;
Yet, as its faded tints I view,
And withered form, its sacred hue
Recalls the mighty power and pride
Of those who stemmed the ancient tide,
When Trojans died that Troy might live,
And sighed for other lives to give;
When glory bloomed on leafless stems
And valor won its diadems,
And, as around this loved, frail thing
An hundred tender memories cling

Of him above whose clay it grew
Which shall survive its faintest hue;
So, though long since the poet's wreathes
Are dead, of which this flowret breathes,
Remember him upon whose brow
They once reposed, reposing now;
And hold this sweet memento dear
To lay upon Affection's bier.

FORGETFULNESS.

Sweet nymph of Lethe's deeply rolling stream,
Whom love-lorn amoratas ever bless,
Who makest all unkind events a dream,
Maid of sincerity, Forgetfulness!

Thou with thy garments fashioned of the night;
The poppy wreath upon thy noble brow;
The volume on whose pages thou shalt write
The names of all whom time doth favor now;

'Tis sweet to know that when these rounds are run
In grasping at delusive stars of fame,
Thou shalt remain—the solitary one!—
To solace me in disappointment's shame;

To know that all which I should else regret,
Of feet that faltered for too lofty heights,

By thy congenial aid I shall forget,
And brook the thought of future hopes and blights.

Or, with no sad remembrance of the past,
Of hope that flattering circumstances gave,
May turn my mind from earth's remorseless blast,
And rest upon thy pillow in the grave.

MY BOOK-MARK.

Behold upon this fabric fair
What wonders of the 'broider's art
Her dainty hand, with deftness rare,
Has woven for a constant heart!

Behold the richness of each strand
  Whose silent soul she made to speak
By fashioning, with master hand,
  These fair-faced blooms with tinted cheek!

Did unstained Eden's flowery hoard,
  With all the freshness of the morn,
A rival of the flowers afford
  Which this memorial adorn?

Its storied amaranth which fled
  The fall—was it immortal more
Than these unsung creations, spread
  To mark the bounds in volumed lore?

No *fleur-de-lis* nor petalled sign
  Of Yorkists or Lancastrians
Was ever prized like this design—
  More guarded by its partisans.

Affection, fond affection, views
The varied beauty blowing here,
And turns to one who blooms in hues
Which make her far a fairer peer.

The beauty which her magic touch
Has wrought, reminds—reminds alone!
Howe'er displayed, it were not such
Transcendent beauty as her own.

Sweet Destiny! her hand has woven
Herein the fate of my poor heart,
Which, with her scissors sharp and cloven,
Her sister cannot clip apart!

LINES IN AN ALBUM.

In those realms of life eternal,
Where angelic voices swell,
Where the beams of light supernal
In unbroken glory dwell;

Where the loved ones, gone before us,
Join that great seraphic throng,
Which recites the endless chorus,
Dancing blissfully along;

Where sweet streams of Life are threading
Shady valleys of Content,
Kissed by blossoms, ever shedding
Perfumes through that orient,—

There where none to dwell are fitter
Who as yet its courts have trod,
Rarest jewel! may'st thou glitter
In the galaxy of God!

Then my soul, its wings extending,
Shall attain to that new birth—
To that blending, never ending,
Which my fancy deemed for earth.

HER DIARY.

If but the unrelenting Fates
Would grant that I might lift the lid,
And learn what tales that book relates,
What gems within its bounds are hid—
Those deathless treasures of the mind
Her candid hand has stored away,
As each succeeding day resigned
The thoughts appointed to convey,

Would all that true love prizes best
  Upon the sacred leaves be shown?
Or, as with fair Pandora's chest,
  Would hope within be found alone?
Might I discern, with joy supreme,
  Responsive echoes to that heart
Whose love her matchless beauty's beam
  Long since constrained it to impart?

When distance took her from my side,
  And hope half died in one farewell,
Was there one impulse to abide?
  Those pages—those alone—may tell!
There lie the secrets which the art
  And nature of the mind have long
Besought her vainly to impart,
  To make my life a sigh or song.

O may her constant spirit bless
  My life with pure and holy light,
Until my love, with warm excess,
  Shall make our melted hearts unite !
Then to that journal kept on high
  Of human thoughts, of mortal deeds,
Almighty God, when time rolls by,
  Shall turn, and bless us as he reads.

WHEN THE KILLDEES COME.

When the north winds sigh through the shivering pines
  And the last bee ceases to hum ;
When the sickly sun half obscurely shines
Through the clouds that make gray horizon lines,
  It is then that the killdees come.

Summer's life and light I will not deplore;
Vernal buds are joyous some;
But a flood-tide of thought from an unknown shore
Cometh back, with a breath of the winters of yore,
To my heart, when the kildees come.

Dearest friend, ah! still must I vainly yearn?
Must the silence ever be dumb?
Wilt thou not, while the lamps of existence burn,
To my heart, with the joy of our youth return,
Once again, when the killdees come?

GOOD-NIGHT!—IT MUST NOT BE GOOD-BYE.

GOOD-NIGHT!—It must not be good-bye.
Although the gloom of parting fall,
Our spirits fain would prophesy
A brighter meeting after all
Has been fulfilled which needs must be
Ere hope attain its perfect end,
And calmly over thee and me
Content its pinions shall extend.

Good-night!—It must not be good-bye.
My heart shall not forget its pole;
But, when temptation's storms are high,
Unchanged, 'twill keep its firm control.

And, when the billows of affairs,
Disturbed, shall cap themselves with foam,
That heart shall turn amidst all cares
To thee, and call thy heart its home.

Good-night!—It must not be good-bye,
For hope is in our fond farewell;
And soon within that peerless eye,
Where sistered love and beauty dwell,
My own, with only such delight
As separation lends, shall gaze,
And view those graces which excite
My changeless heart's impassioned praise.

Good-night!—It must not be good-bye.
Creation's laws remain the same.
The morning shall revivify
Itself and reassert its claim;

And though we meet no more on earth,
Our kindred spirits shall arise
Beyond a land where night has birth,
And say, "Good-morning!" in the skies.

WHEN ROME'S DEGENERATE LEGIONS.

"The prostrate South to the destroyer yields
Her boasted titles and her golden fields;
With grim delight the brood of winter view
A brighter day, and skies of azure hue:
Scent the new fragrance of the opening rose,
And quaff the pendant vintage as it grows."—GRAY.

WHEN Rome's degenerate legions, confident
In the precarious truce their northern foes,
Designedly, a little while had lent
In order to destroy them in repose,

Threw off the weighty armor which so bent
Their enervated forms, their foemen rose,
And, with their rude, barbaric implements,
Subverted Rome and smiled at her defence.

The purpling hill-sides of the warmer clime,
Which subjects of the seven-hilled mistress pruned,
Gave up their vintage for the gleeing time,
And, freely flowing, all their hearts attuned
To *songs*, and nerved their arms to *deeds*, of crime.
Rome's laws they with impunity impugned;

And Woden's worshippers, with brand
and dart,
Defaced the Christians' sacred strides
of art.

Nor dared they raise a hand or voice to
save
The grace and greatness which emo-
tionless,
Those children of the Danube viewed;
nor gave
To insult one reciprocal aggress.
In Bravery's very cradle none were
brave,
But, when invasion they could not
suppress,
Applauded, to preserve, in guilt and
shame,
The lives which ill-deserved the
Roman name.

And so, fair spirit of my infant verse,
In whom the Graces with Minerva blend,
Thou whose fond blessing, like the warning curse
On Cain's existence ordered to attend,
Has made all men to know me, since my worse
Than listless soul that blessing bade ascend
To heights undreamt of, or else vaguely deemed
More lofty than mankind had ever dreamed—

So, though this armor which about my heart
Through night and day and seasons' change I wear,
Grow heavy with the weight desires impart

Of other subjects, or with doubting
care;
Yet do I know that never-equalled
art
Could not restore the groves and
temples fair
Love-built within my soul, if once its
foes
Should overcome the barriers that
oppose.

Such judgment as the zealous devotees
Of god Osiris held, should be ful-
filled
If one thine image impious hands
should seize:
That other world, which love alone
can build—
More luminous than that the Mani-
chees

Have made their better principle to
gild—
Would lapse into primeval gloom
again
And chaos reassume anarchal reign.

REMIND THEE NOT!

Remind thee not that in an hour
When better judgment lost its hold,
My earnest tongue's persuasive power
Made thee the secret truth unfold?

Remind thee not that when thy heart
Compassionately heard me plead,
It deigned its feelings to impart
When it were cruel not to heed?

Remind thee not? Well dost thou know
That whatsoever brings regret
To thee, I willingly forego—
And more:—would help thee to forget.

But when, amazed that such can be,
I think how doubly blest am I
To be even lightly loved by thee
Whose pity had been meed too high,

In vain my overflowing heart
Attempts its feelings to control—
And oft when words refuse to start
Has silence wrecked the sickened soul.

So, if in some too-ardent mood
My love, which fain would speak and live,
Remind thee, in its gratitude,
Of thine, I only pray, "Forgive!"

A VIOLET-GIFT.

FROM perennial Spring's dominions
Of transcendent light and gladness,
By her presence made more bloomy,
Sweets! I welcome thee whose pinions
Bear remembrance, break this sadness,
And make life itself less gloomy.

Though thy leaves, already fading,
Pass away, thou still shalt flourish
In unfailing recollection
While *her* image, all-pervading,
With my constancy to nourish,
Blossoms in this soul's affection.

TO MY FRIEND.

Should all the Muses concentrate
Their powers to aid my feeble strain,
If half thy charms they would relate,
Their efforts must be all in vain.

For when the purest attributes
Of nature, one and all, unite
To form one being, who disputes
That song cannot those charms recite?

Since friendship bound its silver chain
Around our hearts with steadfast hold,
Its links from thee have known no stain,
But love has rather made them gold.

A cynic of the Roman school
Once wished that heaven had designed,
In wisdom, some Utopian rule
To do away with womankind. *

But had he seen thee, friend of mine,
And known thy goodness as I know,
He must have blest the wise design
That fixed such souls as thine below.

When coming years shall pass away,
And other hearts are weaned from thine,
Look back upon the past and say
One heart is true, and that is mine.

* "Metellus Numidicus, the censor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that, had kind nature allowed us to exist without the help of women, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and he could recommend matrimony only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty."—GIBBON'S *Decline and Fall*, chap. VI., note 64.

INSINCERITY.

A FRAGMENT.

WRONG it were to thus deceive thee;
Sad indeed it were to grieve thee;
Sadder still 'tis now to leave thee
  In thy desolate distress.
But thy confidence is shaken
In that soul which can awaken
Nevermore the bosom taken
  To its insincere caress.

Ah! could I recall those glances,
Each of which, it seems, entrances
But too well thy female fancies,
  Greater bliss had been endowed.
Thy sad heart would cease repining
For that mystic silver lining,
Which thy longing's vague divining
  Deemed behind life's frowning
    cloud.

Let the waves of languid Lethe
Roll around, above, beneath thee
'Till the power it bequeath thee
To forget the futile past;
'Till thy sad heart cease such throbbing—
From thine eye its lustre robbing—
'Till thy weary spirit's sobbing
Die upon the passing blast.

Plunge, ah! plunge into the torrent
From my unsafe rock, abhorrent;
Haply down thy being's current
Thou shalt find a safer rest.
This, perchance, may prove a teacher
Too severe for such a creature,
Youthful shown by word and feature,
But experience is best.

Why I did it? Ask the breezes,
Each of which in winter teases,
Or with summer fragrance pleases;

They will ask and answer, "Why?"
Ask the billows of the ocean,
Tossing in their wild emotion,
Type of wavering devotion!
They will answer with a sigh.

Ask *me* why so insincerely
Proved that soul which once so dearly
Held thy life as something nearly
Kindred to the souls on high;
And my answer, dear, will truly
Be but that the heart unruly,
When its brightness burns unduly,
Self-consumed, at last must die.

WHEN WE MET.

'Tis Spring; and with these charms untold
Of bursting buds and tinted blooms,
Which zephyrs' fairy hands unfold
And rob of all their sweet perfumes—

With this same warmth the vernal sun
Shed when we met upon the green,
My thoughts recur to thee, sweet one!
And fain would linger on that scene.

I see through memory's searching eye
Thy nimble step, thy perfect grace;
The glories of an evening sky;
Thy flowing hair and glowing face.

And by the emerald array
Now habited by shrub and tree,
Transported to that meeting day,
My thoughts, dear girl, recur to thee.

If I some pleasing strain have sung—
For seeing thee I could but sing!—
It was as these soft buds have sprung
To meet the warm caress of Spring,

For when thy sunny eyes diffused
  Their light upon my tuneless heart,
To such refulgence all unused,
  I felt the silent harp-chords start.

And should that meeting terminate
  In ties, twin sister of my soul!
Which shall remain inviolate
  When spheres and planets cease to roll;—

Be re-united in that world
  Where all is perfect, endless love;
Long after earthly love is furled
  To open in the courts above—*

* "The flame that late my heart consumed,
  Whose sparks I cherish and conceal,
Is quenched on earth, but reillumed
  In heaven—in radiant pomp to wheel
Amid those other lights which there
Perpetual bliss and glory share.
TASSO: *Wiffins' Trans.*

What then were plaudits of mankind?
What might the praise of earth endow?
Or proudest wreaths which mortals twined
To place on my then-worthy brow?

Their flattery I could all ignore;
Their senseless laurels cast aside,
To know, that I, forever more,
Should be of thee the love and pride.

Remember me; and if some seed
Of friendship slumbers in thy breast,
Care for it well; its fibers feed,
Until 'tis love—the last, the best!

FAREWELL.

"Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been—
A sound which makes us linger:—yet farewell!"
—*Childe Harold.*

THOUGH nothing else should lead me on
To that celestial clime,
To which my truest friends are gone,
Beyond the bounds of time—

Though all the endless love and rest
Which denizens enjoy
In that sweet region of the blest,
Should not my thought employ;

This, this alone, would bind my heart
To Heaven's transcendent shore,
To know that then we need not part;
No; never, never more.

I, who have seen my star of hope,
Which once at zenith burned,
Decline beyond the western slope
When from some face I turned,

Cannot but seek sometime to dwell
In that eternal place
Where I shall never say farewell
And need not miss your face.

Farewell! We two who hope to meet
Beyond the turbid tide
Which rolleth at Almighty's feet
May never meet this side.

But grant me this, my earnest prayer:
When greatest distance parts,
Then may we, fairest of the fair!
Dwell closest in our hearts.

'Tis sad to say farewell to thee
Whom I have loved so long;
And sorrow even now must be
The burden of my song.

As now the retrospective tide
Of joys comes o'er my brain,
In which I revelled at your side,
Which may not come again—

The times when you have checked
my feet
That else had gone astray—
Your image rising pure and sweet
To light another way—

The moonlight on your noble brow,
The sunlight on your hair,
The starlight on your cheeks—all
now
Come back so fresh and fair.

I see the snowy white costumes—
So far less pure than thee—
And catch again the sweet perfumes
Of blooms that bloomed for me.

And, knowing that these are no more,
Some sorrow needs must be;
But grant this respite, I implore:
Sweet one! remember me.

LINES.

Written while between the graves of Richard Henry Wilde and Paul H. Hayne.

Two children, weary with their toys,
Here slumber side by side.
And, while my loving heart employs
Its praise, they wait awakening joys
In realms where pleasure never cloys,
In heaven glorified.

Augusta, Ga., August 26, 1888.

MY PEN.

[Presented to the author by Paul H. Hayne, "with which," said he, "were written some of my best lyrics."]

THERE is a temple in the East
On which designers, gilders,
And lapidaries had increased
The glory of its builders,

Until its marble walls in air,
Like fairy fabrics gleaming,
Seemed to the pious kneelers there
Created of their dreaming.

But on Sophia's splendid dome—
Its glories evanescent—
The Christians cross has now become
The Moslem's glittering crescent.

And with the worshippers who bowed
As orthodox confessors,
The holy spell has fled the crowd
Of Islam-bent possessors.

So, relic of a mighty mind!
Thy spell no longer lingers;
Thy form alone could be resigned
To these unsanctioned fingers.

And though I love thee for the skill
Of him who once impelled thee,
Such thoughts from thee no more distil
As when the master held thee.

O if thou in these hands couldest feel
Some faint revisitations
Of powers which, thrilling through thy steel,
Infatuated nations!—

That thou couldst drink a fervent soul,
Exhaustless, pure and varied,
And pour it out again to roll
O'er hearts long parched and arid!

Then would I lift thy strengthened powers
Beyond ungrateful blindness
To him in heaven's delightful bowers,
And bless his love and kindness.

MY STUDY.

DEDICATED TO F. L. STANTON.

THE drooping honeysuckles spread,
With carelessness and grace,
Their fragrant branches round my head
In this secluded place.

I sit beside the myrtle trees,
With roses at my right,
While in the white syringa, bees
Are taking their delight.

The lily stalks and long spiræa
Are nodding to and fro,
Until the season of the year
Shall come when they may blow.

The Muses haunt this tamarisk shade;
And here, in mid-day dreams,
When on their harps their hands are laid,
I ply my pensive themes.

No bust of Sophocles looks down
Upon me from a shelf—
No Grecian sage, with knowing frown,
Makes me disparage self.

But here, with only those whose thought
Engages mine to-day,
I sit contented, caring naught,
How "runs the world away."

If amatory thoughts engage
My fancy's highest mood,
No disapproving stoic sage
Here ventures to intrude.

Or, if awhile I choose to keep
The poarch's callous creed
And let my heart's emotions sleep,
No vain polemics heed.

And so within these study walls
Of Nature's own design,
I sweetly dream, when quiet falls,
Of thee, sweetheart of mine!

TO STANTON. *

FRIEND Stanton, lo! these many days
We've listened for your voice,
But not a word from you we've heard
To make our hearts rejoice.

* The only explanation that I am prepared to offer for the appearance of these unusually weak lines here is the necessity of their reproduction in order to connectedly introduce the characteristic reply which they elicited from the truly gifted poet to whom they were addressed, F. L. Stanton, of Rome, Georgia. In this I am prompted partly by vanity, I confess, but partly, also, by a sincere desire to do homage, slight though it be, to his rising genius; and, like Gil Blas to old Doctor Sangrado, "*Je lui remerciai de m'avoir si promptement rendu capable de lui servir.*"

Methought that when the leaves turned red
Your song would surely come,
But in your heart no strains yet start:
Friend Stanton, are you dumb?

"You say I've ceased from singin', an' some sorrow you've expressed
That my Muse is gittin' lazy since I left the sweet southwest;
Well, maybe so, an' not so; we are best when we are brief;
But the rose of song's a-bloomin', though the frost is on the leaf.

I'll tell you why I'm silent, why I don't sing as of yore:
'Taint because my harp is broken an' needs fixin' at the store;
But I'm kinder like a stranger to these towerin' hills of snow,
An' my songs is gone before me where the southland roses grow.

I am always thinkin', thinkin' of the time that used to be,
When the springs an' golden autumns flushed the friendly fields of Lee,
An' as I look toward you in those far-off plains an' skies,
The sun may be a-shinin', but it's rainin' round my eyes!

Well! here's a greetin' to you: I am still within the ring,
An' a-lovin', an' a-listenin' to the songs the others sing,
But my harp, jes' for the present, is reposin' on the shelf,
An' my heart makes all the music—but it keeps it to itself."

We hear anon from Folsom's Muse:
Sweet Dumas sings sometimes;
And, now and then, Sarge takes his pen
To drop some limpid rhymes.

But you—has Humor killed your Muse,
So still she has become?
Or, worse than all that could befall,
Friend Stanton, are you dumb?

THE VAULTS OF TIME.

THOSE VAULTS of Time! what do they hold
In their unmeasured amplitude?
Could their profundity unfold,
What scenes by mortals would be viewed?
O that those portals were unrolled
That human eye might once behold!

A passing angel gave the key;
And, opening those portals wide,
I saw mankind in each degree,
All dust—all dead—and side by side—
The high, the low, the slave, the free,
Commingled in mortality.

The vanished ages that had died
On weary wings were buried there;
I saw the spectral shade of Pride;
Saw Hope resolved into Despair;
Souls in the silence they defied,
And laurels, long since parched and dried.

A fatal atmosphere prevailed;
Earth's freshest blooms had gone to dust;
All light had glimmered, waned and failed,
And Love had come to be Disgust;

The flush of beauty had consumed
The downy cheeks it once illumed.

"Ye remnants of all things that were,
But are not! tell me, if ye may,
For all mankind's protracted stir
And feverish anxiety,
Is nothing here but death?" I cried;
And echo answered, "Death!"—and
died.

ARISTIDES' FAREWELL.

"Then Aristides rears his honest front,
Spotless of heart, to whom the unflattering voice
Of freedom give the noblest name of Just."
—THOMSONS *Seasons.*

ATHENS! since I soon must leave
thee—
Since each ostracising shell*
Of those who would not believe me
Bids me say my last farewell;

*Gr. *ostrakon*—a shell, upon which the votes of ostracism were written.

Seat of all my vanished glory!
Centre of my former pride!
Thou, for whom I, who adore thee,
Willingly had lived or died!

Hear me! for I still would save thee—
Doomed to exile though I stand—
From their thralls who would enslave thee
With a dire, relentless hand.

Legions of the tyrant Persian†
Whom Miltiades repulsed,
Crouch now for their dread incursion,
When all Greece shall be convulsed.

Just beyond the crystal waters
Of the Hellespont are they,
Now preparing for the slaughters
That shall dim an early day.

†Xerxes.

When the battle cloud, that darkens
O'er thee, shall in fury burst
On thy heads, most noble archons!
With the thunders time has nursed,

Ye must arm these waiting legions
Strongly, for the common cause,
That these favored native regions
May retain their own just laws.

Great Themistocles has told thee
That thy armament would be—
If the better sense controlled thee—
Mighty fleets upon the sea.

And of this would I address thee
In my latest moments here,
That the god of wars may bless thee
When these enemies appear.

Go! convert thy marine powers
Into soldiery, I pray;
Build ye fortresses and towers
To withstand the coming fray.

Arm them strongly; concentrating
Into land force all thy main,
They may stand, the foe awaiting,
In the Mountains, Vale and Plain.

Then no tempest can destroy them;
Mutinies no more shall be;
Sirens' songs shall not decoy them;
Greece shall live and still be free!

This is all; the sun to-morrow
Shall behold me far away
On my pilgrimage, in sorrow
At the will of Greece to-day.

O that this degeneration
  Ever should befall a land
Which once held a noble nation,
  Boasting Justice, reigning hand!

Exile lands would seem less dreary,
  Since I soon must tread their dust,
But for knowing thou art weary
  Of my being called the Just.*

Athens of my infant gambols!
  Athens of my childhood's day!
Athens of my manhood's rambles!
  Now adieu—for aye, for aye!

* Nepos, Plutarch, and other historians, relate that during this ostracism, brought about by Aristides' jealous rival, Themistocles, alarming the Athenians against the danger of the popularity Aristides was rapidly acquiring for strict justice, a voter, without knowing to whom he spoke, came up to Aristides, and, handing him his shell, requested him to write on it the name of Aristides. "The latter asked, in surprise, if Aristides had done him any wrong. 'No,' was the reply, 'and I do not even know him, but it irritates me to hear him everywhere called *the just*.' Aristides made no reply, but took the shell and wrote his name on it."

THE LAST SOVEREIGN.

[On the occasion of Victoria's Jubilee.]

WITH TRAMP of royal horses' feet,
Through loyal cries and drummer's
beat,
Where eager thousands line the street,
Comes England's grand parade;
While representatives of earth
Proclaim, with unrestricted mirth,
Victoria's unrivalled worth,
And hail the cavalcade.

Profound old organs peal their notes
Deep down in awe-inspiring throats,
While loudly on the welkin floats
A sweet "God save the Queen!"
All earth and sky have donned a dress
Of unaccustomed loveliness,
That they may honor her no less
Who makes the gorgeous scene.

O heavens of transcendent blue!
O scene of royal retinue!
Behold, behold her passing through
With whom the sceptre fades!
Symphonious notes which, rising, bear
Aloft the people's chanted prayer
Will be no more when she shall share
The common fate of shades.

The regency that through the tears
And blood of full nine hundred years
Has held its sway, now slowly nears
Its end—one life between.
Yes, well may they rejoice, for men
Shall soon arise, with tongue and pen,
To chain dread Thraldom in its den,
And ask no king or queen.
June, 1888.

DEATH'S MYSTIC SPELL.

At this silent midnight vigil,
As I watch his fleeting breath,
Solemn thoughts come o'er my spirit
Of that mystic spell called Death.

Tell me, aged seer of heaven!—
If in heaven age may be—
Will those sloping strands of Jordan
Be so wildly tossed for me?

Will those distant shores of glory
Be so distant for my feet
When the boundary of time and
Of eternity shall meet?

Will it come at morn or evening?
Be received as friend or foe?
Come with anxious friends surrounding
Who discern life's feebling flow?

Others, known, have been enshrouded
In this spell and borne before,
Who partook with me of being;
When may I exist no more?

At this silent midnight vigil,
As I watch his fleeting breath,
Solemn thoughts come o'er my spirit
Of that mystic spell called Death.

HERE LAY ME DOWN TO REST.

"Men have that which they like more than life."
—*Mencius.*

WHERE bending skies enclose a land
Created by immortal hand
With smiling favors such as none
Beside may boast beneath the sun;
Where the bright plumaged bird of Spring
Forever waves its magic wing—
Amidst these scenes our fathers blest,
Here lay me down to rest.

Where perfume-laden winds awake
The silvery waves of stream and lake;
Where, in the forest depth profound,
The feathered choir makes joyous sound,
And verdure-covered mountains rise
As though they sought to kiss the skies,
The sunlight gleaming on each crest,
Here lay me down to rest.

When weary with traversing heights
Where heroes fell, and viewing sites
Where splendor, in the ages past
Had reared her structures tall and vast,
Here let kind mother earth bequeath
To me a lonely grave beneath
Her grassy surface, I request,
To lay me down to rest.

I know ambition, hope and strength
Will wither and decay, at length;
Forgetfulness will cast its spell
Where freshest fruits of memory
dwell;
Life, too, shall soon refuse to stay.
And, as the glowing orb of day
Some evening sinks behind the west,
Here lay me down to rest.

TO MISS W.—

Adieu! if fulness of the heart
Constrain to speak, it, too, makes
dumb.
Lone, heart-sick, anguished thus to
part,
All speechless has this soul become!

Sweet hope, alas! foredoomed to die,
Since *I* it was whose heart it swelled,
I bid farewell, and oh! that I
Should live to see my heaven so helled!

ALAS! THAT FATEFUL HOUR HAS COME.

Alas! that fateful hour has come
And frenzied nature's heart grows dumb!
You go! that momentary beam
I saw from heavenly portals gleam,
As though some pitying angel stood
Awhile and let the golden flood
Within, so comfortingly bright,
A moment touch on mortal sight,
At last is shut within its walls,
And sorrow's night, supplanting, falls.

How deep that night! no lonely star!
No thought to temper what we are!
You go! and all the perfect grace,
The happy heart, the smiling face,
The soul that blent with earnest eye
Description's efforts to defy,
The nameless winning of the whole
That woke my latent fire of soul—
All, all, since my unhappy lot
They cannot bless, must be forgot!
My friend,—alas! how feebly tame
The very accents of that name!—
My friend, when first we met, did I
Not this sad fate then prophesy?
Did I not say, when Love and Hope,
Just born, surveyed their horoscope,
That such, since nature's blandest
smiles
To me were e'er but Siren wiles,
Must be, by heaven's—or hell's—stern
laws,

The destined ending of my cause?
When monarchs sink, when paupers sleep,
When death-dews o'er the tyrant creep,
Some friendly tear will always start,
But, ah! none mourn the expiring heart!

TO LITTLE MAY.

In the hush of mystery
Of a future history
Who has never, anxious, watched an epoch's dawning day?
So beneath thy horoscope,
Anxious with a morrow's hope,
Stand we, trusting that December ne'er shall cloud the sky of May.

THE END.

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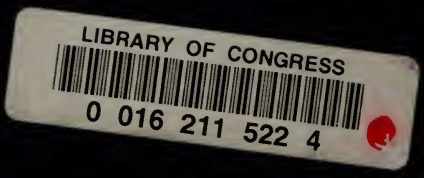
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